

## Chapter 3.85

### CAPITOL ENVIRONS DESIGN STANDARDS

*The Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission  
is responsible for administration of these design standards.*

#### Section 1. ORGANIZATION

This design handbook for the Capitol Environs District consists of four major sections. The **Purpose Statement** sets the overall goals and principles of the District and of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission. **Review Practices** describe the manner in which the Commission conducts reviews and updates this document. **Design Standards** explain generally how the goals apply to certain areas and issues. They are divided into three sections: *Overall*, *Buildings & other "Edge Definers,"* and *Open Space*. Finally, the **Guidelines** interspersed among the **Standards** provide more specific interpretations.

#### Section 2. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Nebraska State Capitol, designed by architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue and built for the people of Nebraska between 1922 and 1932, is a National Historic Landmark and an esthetic and historic treasure of our state. The purposes of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission ("the Commission") are to maintain and enhance a dignified setting for the State Capitol, to encourage appropriate public and private improvements within the Capitol Environs District ("the District"), and to protect vistas to the Capitol which extend the impact and inspiration of the building throughout the city and the surrounding countryside.

Visitors within the Malls and to Capitol Square should experience a sense of being in a recognizable space, with a feeling of arrival when they enter these special places, and of departure when they leave. This experience is created by spaces that have identifiable limits or edges, with the span of the open spaces and the height of the edges in careful relationship. Therefore the Capitol Environs Design Standards ("the Standards") focus on those elements--buildings and landscape--that define the edges of Capitol Square and the Malls, and on the open spaces between those edges.

Buildings and landscape features at the Mall edges are intended to create an appropriate context for the Capitol's extended axes. Edges shall have a minimum scale so as to establish the context of each axis and its enclosure, and shall have a maximum scale so as to preserve the dominance and views of the Capitol. Therefore minimum and maximum heights are established for new buildings facing Capitol Square or the Malls.

The District's sense of place, and the long-term strengthening of that quality, is and will be based in large part on how individual buildings relate to one other. The design of new buildings should either be highly compatible with their existing context, or should clearly set a desirable standard for surrounding future development. The Commission will expect the design and the presentation of proposals for new buildings to demonstrate their relationship to the District's setting. Furthermore,

if individual elements within the District (either buildings or landscape features) are designed to be boldly and individually conspicuous, they will compete with the dominance of the Capitol. Therefore these guidelines call for high quality materials and design, and a sense of context and restraint appropriate to this special setting.

### **Section 3. REVIEW PRACTICES**

1. The Commission can be of the most service if it is involved at an early stage in the design development of major improvements.
2. The Commission strongly urges owners and developers to engage qualified design professionals able to address the esthetic and functional issues unique to the District. If the scope of a project does not warrant professional design assistance, or if owners have difficulty in securing design services, the Commission will strive to assist in obtaining the necessary design expertise.
3. Proposals for new buildings must be presented in the context of their existing surroundings.
4. Major projects such as construction of new buildings or demolition of important existing buildings will ordinarily be reviewed at one month's public hearing, then acted upon at the next month's meeting. When such projects are the subjects of preliminary design discussions with the Commission, the Commission may combine hearing and action in a single meeting.
5. The Commission may approve projects which are not in strict conformance with this document, based on findings that the applicant has developed a design solution which meets the spirit and intent of the Capitol Environs Ordinance. Those areas within the District which do not face Capitol Square or one of the Malls have less impact on the Capitol. In evaluating specific projects in light of this document, the spirit of the **Design Standards** carries more weight than the letter of the **Guidelines**.
6. The Commission shall refer review of applications pertaining to landmarks designated under LMC 27.57.120 to the Historic Preservation Commission and shall accept "Certificates of Appropriateness" and "Certificates of Exception" approved by the Historic Preservation Commission as equivalent to certificates issued by the Commission. However, the "Certificate of Allowance" procedure outlined in LMC 27.57.160 shall not pertain within the District.
7. The Commission will be mindful of the constraints imposed on projects by zoning, fire, building, accessibility, and other codes and regulations, but will not automatically waive its Standards to meet other requirements. The ideal project offers design solutions that meet all requirements.
8. The Commission will review this document and suggest any necessary changes within its annual report to the Governor, State Legislature, and City Council. Amendments shall be subject to public hearing before the Commission and review by the Planning Commission prior to being submitted to the City Council for action.

## OVERALL DESIGN STANDARDS

### Design Standard 1: Setting

The Capitol should **dominate** the District and other improvements in the area should play the important, **subordinate** role of providing its setting.

### Design Standard 2: Proximity

The nearer a property is to the Capitol, the greater responsibility it bears in the District. Buildings and other improvements facing Capitol Square should meet very high standards for design, construction, and maintenance. Improvements facing the Capitol Malls (Centennial/north, Lincoln/west, south, and east) should also meet high standards. Other improvements within the District but not facing the Square or the Malls should not intrude upon the Capitol's setting and should contribute to the overall quality of the District.

#### **Guideline 2.1:**

*Proposals for new construction in the District south or east of the Capitol, but not directly facing Capitol Square or the Malls, shall be evaluated for compliance with the Neighborhood Design Standards appended to LMC 27.18 (Residential Conservation District).*

### Design Standard 3: Memorials and Monuments

Installation of monuments and memorials should be based on the symbolic program established at the Capitol. Therefore no memorials should be added to the Capitol grounds. The Capitol itself is a memorial and has integral memorial spaces (the Nebraska Hall of Fame and Memorial Hall). Memorials may be considered for addition to the Malls, within their overall design guidelines, assigning memorials of statewide or national significance to Centennial Mall, and individual memorials to the other malls.

#### **Guideline 3.1:**

*Addition of memorials and monuments facing Capitol Square (outside the Capitol grounds) and on the Malls will be evaluated within the same guidelines as other improvements such as buildings and landscape features, stressing compatibility with setting, high-quality design, and appropriate materials.*

### Design Standard 4: Public Art

Public art can enliven an urban environment, enrich pedestrian experience, and stimulate interaction between artist and viewer. In the District, public art, like all other improvements, is subordinate to the overall purpose of enhancing the Capitol. The Commission encourages addition of public art to the District, while applying the same standards of fitness to place and quality of materials required of other improvements.

#### **Guideline 4.1:**

*Proposals for placement of public art in the District should consider and describe the relationship of proposed works to their immediate surroundings and to the Capitol.*

**Guideline 4.2:**

*Two types of public art which may be appropriate in the District are:*

- ◆ *monumental works, of national or international significance;*
- ◆ *pedestrian-scale works.*

**Guideline 4.3:**

*Mall master plans may identify specific locations for public art, and works may be commissioned or purchased to strengthen the context of these locations.*

**Guideline 4.4:**

*Poorly maintained public art is detrimental to the District. Works should not be installed (whether acquired by gift or purchase) unless accompanied by an endowment for long-term maintenance.*

**Design Standard 5: Parking Lots**

Surface parking facing the Capitol Square or one of the Malls is inconsistent with the long-term goals of the Commission. Where such use currently exists, it is desirable to improve these properties by installing permanent, high-quality decorative fences, walls, or hedges at the defined "built-to" line, with due consideration for security and screening.

**Design Standard 6: Side Yards**

Minimum side yard setbacks within the District are established by the underlying zoning districts. However, the Commission shall review applications for the appearance and impact of spaces between buildings (or the lack thereof). Screening or other improvements may be required.

**Design Standard 7: Demolition**

Any requests for demolition permits within the District must be accompanied by detailed plans for redevelopment of the site in accord with these Design Standards. Applications for demolition and redevelopment shall be evaluated in light of the contribution of the site to the character of the District, and based on the assumption that landmarks designated by the City of Lincoln or identified in these Design Standards should be preserved.

**Design Standard 8: Capitol Views**

View corridors to the Capitol listed in the "Urban Design Plan for the Nebraska Capitol Environs" of 1977 should be protected. Additional significant view corridors should continue to be identified and their protection enhanced. Improvements within the view corridors should not obstruct the enjoyment of those vistas of the Capitol.

**Guideline 8.1:**

*The Commission encourages conscious incorporation of views of the Capitol tower into the design of buildings and landscape elements.*

## DESIGN STANDARDS FOR BUILDINGS AND OTHER "EDGE DEFINERS"

### Design Standard 9: Facades

New buildings in the District should be designed to enhance the setting of the Capitol and their immediate surroundings. When those surroundings have a high degree of cohesiveness, new designs should be compatible with their setting, strengthening the visual relationships found among existing buildings and landscape features. In areas that lack cohesion, designs should be proposed that offer themes and patterns that can be further expanded in future development.

Brick, stone, or other richly textured, highly durable masonry is desirable for building exteriors on Capitol Square, Centennial Mall, and Lincoln Mall. Permanence should be an overriding characteristic in the choice of exterior materials. Colors should be drawn from a muted palette of warm, earth tones or shades of white, with the context of surrounding buildings as a guide.

#### **Guideline 9.1:**

*Proposals for new buildings should strengthen interrelationships among buildings within a specific setting, while encouraging variations. Features that contribute to compatibility among buildings include similarities in:*

- ◆ *alignment and setback;*
- ◆ *spaces between buildings;*
- ◆ *silhouette, including height and roof pitch;*
- ◆ *building base--relationship of building to ground or site;*
- ◆ *materials and material scale;*
- ◆ *mass and scale;*
- ◆ *building shade and shadow pattern from massing;*
- ◆ *permanence and durability, with 100 year "life cycle" expected facing Capitol Square and 75 year "life cycle" expected on Centennial and Lincoln Malls;*
- ◆ *entrance position, scale, and features;*
- ◆ *color, finish, and texture;*
- ◆ *size, type, and proportion of openings;*
- ◆ *ornamentation and detail, particularly at street level and in the residential areas;*
- ◆ *landscape design and features;*
- ◆ *cornice heights.*

#### **Guideline 9.2**

*Special locations (such as focal points at ends of Malls) or uses (such as churches) present opportunities for buildings of greater individual prominence than is otherwise desirable along the Malls or facing Capitol Square.*

#### **Guideline 9.3**

*The Commission encourages designs for new buildings that form parts of larger groups or compositions of structures within the District, including "bookends" on blocks, facing pairs of buildings on opposite sides of a Mall, or buildings that define a positive open space such as a courtyard or square.*

#### **Guideline 9.4**

*The Commission encourages the use of walls, gates, building bases, or landscape features to integrate architectural mass and the street environment.*

**Guideline 9.5**

*Metal is not a suitable primary material for building exteriors in the District.*

**Guideline 9.6:**

*Non-concrete stucco-like materials are discouraged from use on Capitol Square or Centennial and Lincoln Malls, especially on ground floors.*

**Guideline 9.7:**

*Wood is not a suitable primary material for building exteriors on Capitol Square or Centennial and Lincoln Malls.*

**Guideline 9.8:**

*Wood is an acceptable primary exterior material in the residential portions of the South and East Malls, where a broader color palette is also acceptable.*

**Guideline 9.9:**

*Roof drainage for buildings on Capitol Square shall not be positioned beyond the facade line facing the Capitol.*

**Guideline 9.10:**

*On Centennial and Lincoln Malls, balconies, terraces, and other indoor/outdoor elements should be set back from the main plane/built-to line of the mall facade.*

**Guideline 9.11:**

*On the South and East Malls, porches and balconies should be located within the line of the eaves. Columns and railings should be substantially proportioned, providing visual as well as structural support.*

**Design Standard 10: Walls and Fences**

Those properties facing Capitol Square or one of the Malls that are not currently developed with buildings, or where existing buildings are set back further than the "build-to" line, interrupt the "edge" of the space they help define. It is desirable to improve these properties by installing permanent, high-quality decorative fences, walls, or hedges at the defined "built-to" line, with due consideration for security and screening (especially of parking lots).

**Guideline 10.1:**

*Fences along the edges of the Malls should be six (6) feet in height.*

**Guideline 10.2:**

*Fences need not be solid to define the Mall edge, but should be continuous. Wrought iron fences with brick piers are very suitable "edge definers" on Capitol Square and along the Malls.*

**Design Standard 11: Buildings on Capitol Square**

The portion of the District facing the Capitol should be maintained and improved as an area of top-quality but generally unobtrusive office, residential, and church buildings, with very well-designed and maintained landscape and streetscape elements. The area should combine construction of first-class new buildings with the preservation of historic landmarks and scrupulous maintenance of all improvements.

**Guideline 11.1:**

*Capitol Square includes several historic structures listed on the National Register (NR) of Historic Places or designated as Lincoln Landmarks (LL), including Kennard House (NR, 1627 "H" St.), Ferguson House (NR, 700 S. 16th St.), Harris House (NR & LL, 1630 "K" St.), and the President and Ambassador Apartments (NR, 1330 & 1340 Lincoln Mall). These buildings should be preserved and maintained. Other historic buildings which contribute to the Capitol's immediate setting include St. Mary's Church (14th & "K" Sts.), First Christian Church (16th & "K" Sts.), the Yates House (720 S. 16th St.), and the Milburn Apartments (1345 "H" St.).*

**Guideline 11.2:**

*The principal facade of new buildings constructed on property facing Capitol Square must be located on the property line towards the Capitol. This guideline does not preclude use of courtyards or recessed entries as features when the full height of the main portion of the building clearly reinforces the desired edge.*

**Guideline 11.3:**

*The principal elevation of new buildings constructed on property facing Capitol Square must be oriented towards the Capitol, including the primary entrance and fenestration.*

**Guideline 11.4:**

*The maximum height limits within the Environs District are indicated on the Capitol Environs District map appended to LMC 27.56. To achieve the purposes of the District, the following guideline also applies:*

◆ *For new buildings constructed on property with frontage on Capitol Square, a minimum of four stories are required, with a maximum height of 57 feet (1993 USGS elevation 1247).*

**Guideline 11.5:**

*Mechanical units, cooling towers, chimneys, fire towers, stage towers or scenery lofts, noncommercial radio towers or satellite "dishes," or water towers may be permitted atop buildings in the District (in excess of the 57 foot limit) provided they are set back at least fifteen feet from any face of the building, and are screened with permanent materials compatible with the materials of the principal facades of the building.*

**Guideline 11.6:**

*Visible pitched roofs, sloping greater than 1/2" per foot, are not permitted on new buildings constructed on property facing Capitol Square. Pitched roofs concealed by parapets may be considered by the Commission.*

**Design Standard 12: Reinforcing the Edges of the Malls**

The Malls should provide dignified pedestrian and vehicular environments, with well-defined edges and a variety of Capitol views. To reinforce the edges of the District's spaces, it is essential that new buildings be oriented to their respective Mall, or to Capitol Square, and that new buildings have a consistent setback.

**Guideline 12.1:**

*For new buildings constructed on property in the Capitol District **not** facing Capitol Square but fronting one of the Malls, new buildings must be constructed with a well-defined eave or cornice line at least 30 feet in height.*

**Guideline 12.2:**

*The principal elevation of new buildings constructed on property that fronts on a Mall but does not front on Capitol Square must be oriented towards that Mall, including primary entrance and fenestration.*

**Guideline 12.3:**

*The principal facade of new buildings constructed on property facing Centennial or Lincoln Mall must be located on the property line towards the Mall. This guideline does not preclude use of courtyards or recessed entries as features when the full height of the main portion of the building clearly reinforces the desired edge. When the edge is strongly reinforced by a wall or landscape feature, a front yard may be considered.*

**Design Standard 13: Buildings on Centennial Mall**

Centennial Mall should be maintained and improved as an area of private and governmental offices and services, providing important links between the Capitol, the downtown core, and the UNL City Campus.

**Guideline 13.1:**

*The Scottish Rite Temple (NR, 332 Centennial Mall South) and the YWCA (NR, 1432 "N" St.) are the premier historic structures on Centennial Mall; they should be preserved and maintained.*

**Guideline 13.2:**

*The eventual removal of Lincoln Telephone's microwave tower atop 1440 M Street, when technically feasible, would enhance the Capitol District and is a goal of the Commission.*

**Guideline 13.3:**

*For new buildings constructed on property facing Centennial Mall, pitched roofs are not encouraged, but may be permitted.*

**Design Standard 14: Buildings on Lincoln Mall**

Lincoln Mall should be maintained and improved as a fine office and residential area, and as a symbolic link between state and local governments.

**Guideline 14.1:**

*Visible pitched roofs, sloping beyond 1/2" per foot, are not permitted on new buildings constructed on property facing Lincoln Mall. Pitched roofs concealed by parapets will be considered by the Commission.*

**Design Standard 15: Buildings on South Mall**

South Mall should be improved as an attractive residential area, with public improvements that offer a variety of Capitol views while reinforcing a residential environment. The front yard setback and built-to line for new buildings on South Mall shall be eight (8) feet behind the property line fronting the mall. This reduction of the standard front yard in the underlying zoning districts is intended



- ◆ to encourage a uniform "edge" to the mall's open space, consistent with existing landmark-quality buildings,
- ◆ to create more buildable lot area, encouraging quality redevelopment,
- ◆ to narrow the very wide open space created by the 120 foot right-of-way and the zoned 20 foot front yards, which would not reinforce a residential atmosphere for this portion of the District.

**Guideline 15.1:**

*South Mall includes numerous historic structures which should be preserved and maintained, including Noryanna Apartments (835-841 So. 15th), the Eager-Good House (1448 E), the George Woods House (1445 E), and the Baird House (1116 So. 15th). Several other buildings also contribute to the historical character and urban design richness of the Mall, and are desirable to retain and maintain, including: 817-21 So. 15th, Elbeudor (now "Clermont") Apts.; 827-33 So. 15th, Rienza Flats; 901 So. 15th, Minor House/Kenilworth Apts.; 928 So. 15th & 1502-8 E St., Love Apts.; 1020 So. 15th, Old Seventh Day Adventist Church; 1027 So. 15th, Chute Duplex; 1201 So. 15th/1445 C St.; 1448 B St.*

**Guideline 15.2:**

*For new buildings constructed on property fronting on the South Mall (S. 15th St.) pitched roofs of 6/12 pitch (or greater) are permitted.*

**Guideline 15.3:**

*All new construction along So. 15th should be oriented toward the Mall and should contribute to an attractive residential character.*

Design Standard 16: Buildings on East Mall

The East Mall (J Street from 16th to Capitol Parkway) should be maintained and redeveloped as an area of decent, affordable residences convenient to downtown, with enhanced pedestrian/bicyclist facilities joining existing trails into the Capitol area.

**Guideline 16.1:**

*For new buildings constructed on property fronting on the East Mall (J Street), pitched roofs of 6/12 pitch (or greater) are permitted.*

**Guideline 16.2:**

*The built-to line for buildings with frontage on J Street between 16th and 17th Streets shall be the property line on East Mall or the setback of existing buildings on the same blockface, whichever is larger.*

**DESIGN STANDARDS FOR OPEN SPACE**

Design Standard 17: Capitol Grounds Landscape

The "Landscape Restoration Master Plan--Nebraska State Capitol Grounds" of 1985, based on the original Ernst Hemminghaus plan, shall guide the maintenance and improvement of the Capitol grounds.

**Guideline 17.1:**

*Replace original species (consistent with the original design intention) only when more appropriate cultivars or varieties can be chosen for improved design characteristics or disease or insect resistance.*

**Guideline 17.2:**

*Restrict the use of evergreen trees to Capitol Square and private property. Use of evergreen shrubs is encouraged throughout the District.*

**Design Standard 18: General Landscape of All Malls**

The landscape of the Capitol Malls should enhance the Capitol setting and vistas

- ◆ by providing canopy and definition at the mall edge, but leaving the centers of the malls more open;
- ◆ by creating a sense of organization and unity through form, color, texture, and spacing that may be lacking in the adjacent architecture;
- ◆ by establishing a rhythm of visual and physical movement leading ultimately to the Capitol;
- ◆ by providing seasonal change and interest.

There is a delicate balance between a landscape that enhances and one that overwhelms--color and form changes should be in large sweeps and masses to avoid creating small, distracting focal points. The landscape should be bolder and more colorful closest to the Capitol.

Facing Capitol Square and the Malls, front yards shall not contain mechanical equipment, above-ground utilities, docks, or unscreened ramps. Architectural or planted screenings may be offered, with maintenance requirements.

Active use of the Malls should be encouraged by the selection and placement of landscape elements such as seating.

**Guideline 18.1:**

*To focus attention on the Capitol, phase out trees from center medians and replace them with simple, uniform plantings of low shrubs, perennials, or grasses in large masses. Use of perennials is preferred to annual plantings, but annuals will be considered when their maintenance can be assured. Conversion from turf should be tied directly to maintenance capability.*

**Guideline 18.2:**

*Provide seating in as many locations as appropriate. Benches should*

- ◆ *be of high quality, refined materials,*
- ◆ *have backs,*
- ◆ *be readily available commercially or easily repaired in-house,*
- ◆ *be of neutral colors,*
- ◆ *be placed along edges to take advantage of shade and allow pedestrians to be close to circulation but not in it.*

*To provide seating opportunities for conversation, combine benches, trash cans, ash urns and small tables of similar construction and installation.*

**Guideline 18.3:**

*Encourage the use of wide, seating-height caps on retaining walls or edge definers, including pools and fountains.*

**Guideline 18.4:**

*Along blocks of Malls closed to vehicular traffic, allow subtle, small openings through the edge fence or planting from adjacent properties onto Malls to encourage their use.*

**Guideline 18.5:**

*Use high quality pavement that is durable, neutral or natural color, able to be matched or replaced locally or regionally; nonslip but not too rough for high heels; textured or patterned subtly. Asphalt or asphalt pavers are not acceptable. Design paved areas to allow replacement or repair to occur in sections that maintain the established pavement pattern.*

**Guideline 18.6:**

*Retaining walls, seating walls, planters, and other vertical landscape features should be constructed of durable materials, preferably masonry; neutral or natural colors; horizontal lines; no exposed form lines or form-tie holes.*

**Guideline 18.7:**

*Water features can greatly enhance a pedestrian environment but are also expensive and difficult to maintain. In the District, such features should be restricted to Centennial Mall and the first block or two of East Mall (16th St. to 17th or 18th Sts.).*

**Guideline 18.8:**

*Water features should have sculptural quality to their overall design and works, for an attractive appearance whether or not they are operating, or are seasonally out of use.*

**Guideline 18.9:**

*Water features in the District should be designed with sound, rather than spray or large vertical movement of water, as the main quality. Fountains should not interfere with vistas to the Capitol.*

**Guideline 18.10:**

*Color and interest in the center of the malls should be confined to large masses of perennials and grasses 24" or less in height.*

**Guideline 18.11:**

*Use high quality, permanent landscape materials for edging, containing, and paving in neutral or natural colors. Avoid the use of plastic, bright colors, vertical or horizontal landscape timbers or railroad ties. Use of masonry or stone is appropriate where edging or containment is needed. Exercise caution in designing any above-ground planters or planting beds, that they be of sufficient size to support healthy growth of plant materials. Remove undersized planters from existing trees and replace trees as necessary.*

**Guideline 18.12:**

*Utilities, dumpsters, service areas, and the like should be located as inconspicuously as possible, and screened from Capitol Square and the Malls with permanent materials which are compatible with the adjacent buildings.*

**Design Standard 19: Overstory Trees**

Overstory trees establish the visual and physical definition of space along the edges of the malls.

**Guideline 19.1:**

*The overstory tree line along the Malls should be on public property, near the property line.*

**Guideline 19.2:**

*Choose overstory trees of different hardy species with similar growth habits and size to provide visual and physical continuity. Vary the species within each mall according to a specific pattern. Space the trees at regular intervals, but accommodate specific site requirements such as driveways. Overstory trees should be spaced to provide a solid canopy where possible.*

**Guideline 19.3:**

*Overstory trees used to define the edges of the Malls should be single stem, upright ovals, taller than they are wide. Narrow, columnar overstory trees are discouraged, as are trees with a very broad growth habit. Choose species with good fall color.*

**Guideline 19.4:**

*Restrict underplantings to perennials or shrubs requiring little if any division to minimize future root disturbance.*

**Design Standard 20: Understory Trees**

Understory (ornamental) trees should provide seasonal interest and pedestrian scale.

**Guideline 20.1:**

*Along the interior edges of the Malls, use understory (ornamental) trees where pedestrian scale and seasonal interest (including spring bloom, fall foliage color, and winter fruit and bark interest) is needed. Treat understory trees as a mass rather than as individual specimens, and space them accordingly.*

**Guideline 20.2:**

*On all Malls, recognize the dominance of the edge overstory trees, and choose and locate understory trees to avoid interfering with the growth requirements of the overstory trees.*

**Design Standard 21: Landscaping the "Curb Zone"**

The landscape zones between curb and sidewalk, and between sidewalk and private property, should be used to provide visual continuity, interest, and physical separation between pedestrians and vehicles.

**Guideline 21.1:**

*Maintain a landscape zone between curb and sidewalk in all Mall locations with vehicular traffic, to define the pedestrian area. This zone should contain some vertical element, either tree trunks or low (30" or less) shrubs, perennials, grasses, or groundcovers.*

**Guideline 21.2:**

*The curb zone on each Mall should be treated consistently. Private vegetable gardens, flowers, shrubs, and other diversions should be eliminated.*

**Guideline 21.3:**

*Restrict shrubs to specific zones: at the "build-to" lines defined for each Mall, to reinforce that edge; in the landscape zone between curb and sidewalk, or on center medians.*

**Guideline 21.4:**

*Shrub and perennial plantings on the Malls and at their edges should be restricted to 30" or less. Exceptions are the hedges that enclose the edges of the closed blocks of Centennial Mall, where taller shrubs may be appropriate, and other shrub hedges may be approved as substitutes for fences.*

**Guideline 21.5:**

*Shrubs should be used in large masses, with species variation occurring at obvious breaks in the rhythm of the malls. Two or three species can be used in a single planting area, allowing the combination of deciduous and evergreen material. Choose shrubs for seasonal interest, particularly bloom. Choose shrubs with a natural shape and height that requires little pruning to maintain.*

**Guideline 21.6:**

*Do not shear shrubs in public landscapes. Shearing of shrubs on private property facing the Malls or Capitol Square is also discouraged.*

**Guideline 21.7:**

*The primary groundcover on all malls, medians, frontages, and adjacent private property should be turf. Long-range commitment to maintenance may allow conversion of specific turf areas to groundcover shrubs or perennials and grasses for additional interest; however, in the short-term, uniform turf will present the best appearance with the least maintenance. Encourage use of native turf where site conditions allow it.*

**Design Standard 22: Centennial Mall Landscape**

The public spaces of this Mall should be the District's most formal landscaped mall, providing a varied, safe, and attractive pedestrian environment, with opportunities for interaction and enjoyment, within a design framework that offers continuous views of the most prominent facade of the Capitol. The eventual completion of the Mall by closure to vehicles of the blocks between M and N Streets, N and O Streets, and O and P Streets, is desirable.

**Guideline 22.1:**

*Continue the use of red oaks as the major species defining the edges of Centennial Mall, while establishing a plan that allows introduction of other overstory trees on a systematic basis to eliminate monoculture.*

**Guideline 22.2:**

*Remove the interfering and oversized spring snow crabapple trees and replace them with a more appropriate understory species.*

**Guideline 22.3:**

*Remove the outside line of junipers and use yews or dense deciduous plants to establish the edge definition.*

**Guideline 22.4:**

*Convert the central turf spaces of Centennial Mall to buffalograss for interest, lower maintenance, and water conservation.*

**Guideline 22.5:**

*Evaluate the numbers and locations of annual planting spaces along the Mall edges. Change the design as needed for greater continuity and emphasis of focal points, and convert to perennials and grasses.*

**Guideline 22.6:**

*Raise planting beds in closed mall blocks by constructing an edge to control the negative impact of deicers on the health of plants, and to discourage foot traffic.*

**Guideline 22.7:**

*Water features on Centennial Mall should be designed with a hierarchy beginning at the furthest distance from the Capitol and proceeding south moving from exuberant, highly interactive features on the north toward more subdued and "formal" features on the south displaying less verticality and a greater sense of rushing, urgent movement.*

**Guideline 22.8:**

*Redesign of the Centennial Mall fountains should strive to use less water more effectively, eliminating the large, static pools and better integrating the features into the landscape.*

Design Standard 23: Lincoln Mall Landscape

The established lines of red oaks on Lincoln Mall are the most successful mature landscape element of the District. They should be maintained.

**Guideline 23.1:**

*Replace the red oaks as necessary with red or scarlet oaks on the same spacing and in the same line.*

**Guideline 23.2:**

*Maintain the red jade crabs in the center of Lincoln Mall until they can be removed and replaced with large masses of ornamental shrubs, perennials, or grasses.*

**Guideline 23.3:**

*Maintain turf in all public areas of Lincoln Mall, converting to buffalograss where possible.*

**Guideline 23.4:**

*Eliminate the yews around the seating areas when those areas are redesigned. Change seating areas to relate in parallel to the mall. Work with adjacent property owners to locate seating areas on the outside edges of the sidewalk. Enhance seating areas with ornamental and evergreen shrubs, planted less formally than the trees.*

**Guideline 23.5:**

*Encourage yews (which should be allowed to grow together into a solid mass) as an edge definer for private property on Lincoln Mall.*

Design Standard 24: South Mall Landscape

The public landscape improvements along South Mall should offer a variety of Capitol views while reinforcing a residential environment. The "South and East Mall Plan" approved by City Council in 1986 provides general guidance to the development of the public landscape of this Mall.

**Guideline 24.1:**

*Require placement of one overstory tree on every corner and at every alley intersection (or on both sides of the street at midblock) along South Mall for continuity.*

**Guideline 24.2:**

*Plant all four corners of street intersections with the same species, but vary the species from one end of the mall to the other. Variation can also occur at the midblock locations.*

**Guideline 24.3:**

*Begin a replacement program for overstory edge trees, eliminating pin oaks and other undesirable species. Plan replacements in accordance with spacing guidelines outlined above.*

**Guideline 24.4:**

*Eliminate trees from the center islands. Establish turf in center island and between curb and new sidewalk. When maintenance budget allows, convert turf in islands from G Street north to Capitol Square to perennials, grasses, or shrubs in large masses for higher interest.*

**Guideline 24.5:**

*New sidewalks should align with north end, and be a uniform width of six feet.*

**Design Standard 25: East Mall Landscape**

By its long-established pattern of land subdivision, East Mall is and can remain the least symmetrical of the Capitol Malls. Its topography lends special interest to approaching the Capitol along East Mall, which makes it especially desirable to support vehicular, bicyclist, and pedestrian use of this corridor. The impact of East Mall can be enhanced by addressing its various segments differently. The "South and East Mall Plan" approved by the City Council in 1986 provides general guidance to the development of the public landscape of this Mall.

The first two blocks east of the Capitol should be formal in character, lined with oaks. The first block (16th to 17th) should be closed to vehicular traffic and have a quiet but inviting character, taking advantage of its grade-level accessibility from the Capitol and existing trees.

The open space of the second block (17th to 18th Streets) should be expanded southward when possible, to remove the awkward visual terminus of this Mall at 17th Street. The off-center right-of-way of the rest of the East Mall is mitigated by topography and need not be adjusted.

**Guideline 25.1:**

*Develop the 16th to 17th block of East Mall with wide sidewalks at the north and south edges, a central area of low, colorful plantings, seating parallel to the sidewalks, and attractive lighting based on the original streetlights on Capitol Square.*

**Guideline 25.2:**

*Until the 17th to 18th Street open space of East Mall can be expanded southward, create a landscape screen at the east end of the 16th-17th block, forming a designed visual "terminus" with a glimpse of the mall continuing east.*

**Guideline 25.3:**

*Work with major adjacent property owners to expand the apparent limits of 16th to 17th Street block of East Mall outward into a courtyard or nodal effect.*

**Guideline 25.4:**

*Support the vehicular/bicycle use of East Mall by continuing the established line of red oaks, improving the south sidewalk as a bike path, and allowing variety or interest in landscape features on private property.*

#### Design Standard 26: Landscape Maintenance and Replacement

Landscape improvements, especially those on public property, should be designed and installed for economical maintenance and programmed replacement as needed.

#### Design Standard 27: Lighting

The original lighting on Capitol Square shall be maintained and replaced if necessary by duplicate fixtures and poles. Other lighting on the Malls should be designed to enhance visual continuity, pedestrian security, and vehicular safety. On all the Malls, a single system of uniform street lights should provide both vehicular and pedestrian lighting, rather than separate systems. It is desirable that the lights along the Malls be visually consistent with the original Capitol Square lights, although replicating those lights for all the Malls is not a goal of the Commission. Lights should be spaced at each intersection and midblock, so the poles will establish a uniform rhythm. Street lights and street trees should be carefully selected and placed to minimize conflicts between lighting and trees. All wiring shall be underground.

Special lighting may be allowed for unique mall features, either to enhance their significance as focal points or for safety reasons. Use light sources that illuminate without spotlighting.

##### **Guideline 27.1:**

*Metal halide lamps are the preferred standard throughout the environs, except on the Capitol Grounds.*

#### Design Standard 28: Utilities and Other Public Improvements

In keeping with the purposes of the District, it is a primary goal of the Commission that all above-ground utility lines be removed from crossing the Malls or Capitol Square. Furthermore, utility service, meters, and other visible features may not be attached to the facades of buildings facing the Malls or Capitol Square, and should be screened from visibility from Capitol Square or the Malls. Bus shelters shall be designed and located to be integral with the malls. Use of high quality, permanent materials is encouraged.

##### **Guideline 28.1:**

*Newspaper racks, etc. will not be allowed on Capitol Square or the Malls.*

##### **Guideline 28.2:**

*The Commission should be notified prior to commencement of utility work in the District, to minimize disruption to plant materials and to maximize opportunities to remove intrusive elements.*

##### **Guideline 28.3:**

*Placement of landscape features and utility facilities should be coordinated to minimize future conflicts, including damage to plant materials during utility repairs, and damage to facilities.*